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PROOF SHEETS.

THE
REFORMS WHICH SHOULD PRECEDE
AND THE
RESULTS WHICH MUST FOLLOW
THE
EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH.

A DISCOURSE,

*Delivered before the Broome County Polytechnic Association,
Binghamton, N. Y., June 26, 1872.*

BY

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DEDICATED TO THE
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"Science may be called an extension of the perceptions by means of
reasoning."—*Herbert Spencer.*
"Science is trained and organized common sense."—*Prof. Huxley.*

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THE REFORMS WHICH SHOULD PRECEDE,

AND THE

Results Which Must Follow the Equal Distribution of Wealth.



MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

THE foundation of the argument which I desire to impress upon you this evening, will be plainly understood without elaboration, by those of you who are familiar with the results of recent scientific research and who have kept careful step with the advanced philosophic thought of our day. For you have discarded the old notion that this world was created by a special act of the Almighty and its affairs regulated by special interposition of the same Infinite Power, and you have accepted as a fact the existence of the law of Evolution or Universal Progress, as expounded most ably and fully by Herbert Spencer, and as explained in different departments of Science by Darwin, Lubbock, Huxley, Lecky, Tyndall and many others. You regard the existence of this law as not less surely demonstrated than that of the law of gravitation.

But there may be present some who have had neither the time nor the opportunity to examine the results of investigations conducted in accordance with the strictest methods of reasoning, by men who have practically adopted the famous maxim of Descartes—"Give unqualified assent to no propositions but those the truth of which is so clear and distinct that they cannot be doubted."

I will therefore briefly allude to a few of the most important of recently discovered scientific truths. Otherwise I shall be charged by the uninformed, the ill-informed and prejudiced of basing my discourse upon bold and untenable assumptions.

Among the truths which modern science has established is—the vast antiquity of earth and man. The assertion of tradition that the Universe was created but a few thousand years ago, has been completely refuted by ascertained facts. As calculated from the growth of coral reefs, it is as certain, as the conclusions of combined Agassiz and arithmetic, that the earth has existed hundreds of thousands of years; and as deduced from the palpable evidences found in the earth's crust, the most eminent geologists agree that the globe has existed millions of years.

How difficult it is for the mind to grasp a few hundred years or indeed to go much beyond the period of the average duration of individual life. How much more difficult, nay! how impossible to comprehend an expanse of time receding away into millions of years! The period of our lives duration is, indeed, everything to us, but as compared with the far, far extending past it is as nothing; and it is essential to the force of my argument, that this should, to some extent be emphasized. In our own country, especially, it requires an extra effort even to partially comprehend the enormous age of the earth and its inhabitants. We live in a land but lately occupied by civilized beings, surrounded by objects suggestive of recent settlement. A building which has stood a hundred and fifty years is a curiosity. Society, in fact, is scarcely organized in the newer portions of our country; the American race itself is a new and distinct variety of the human species.

You may go to the old world and dwell in homes still not only inhabitable but comfortable, which were built before Columbus sailed on his first voyage of discovery;

you will find around you, churches, castles, monasteries and monuments which were considered old before the great navigator was born. But there, these are ordinary and familiar memorials of past ages to which the inhabitants feel themselves connected through numberless previous generations. While here there are so few objects remindful of antiquity that we seem entirely separated from the remote past. In the eastern hemisphere are found very extensive and conspicuous remains of races, which in all probability lived long anterior to the date which popular chronology assigns to the creation of Adam. In order, however, to entertain for a moment even an approximate idea of the age of the earth, it would be necessary to comprehend a period, compared to which the time that has elapsed since the building of the Egyptian pyramid or the foundation of the Assyrian empire is but an hour.

Moreover, modern science tells us, that during all this vast period, Evolution—the law which governs the development of Force—has been in constant operation—is still operating. The intelligent and unprejudiced person who reads the Nebular Hypothesis, as promulgated by La Place, and Herbert Spencer's essay thereupon, feels convinced that the solar system, and as a part thereof—our own Earth—was created by and through the agency of the fixed law of Evolution. The same law presided over the development of the physical globe after it became an individual body; it governed the growth of life upon its surface; it regulated the progress made in Society, in Government, in Manufactures, Commerce, Language, Literature, Science and Art. With a knowledge of this law, we can interpret the obscure and detect the untruthful narrations of history so far as to be able to affirm that the total human population of the earth has constantly increased; that the average duration of human life is greater than ever; that wealth has been largely multiplied

and unceasingly diffused; that there has been perpetual accumulation of knowledge, and as a consequence, a more extended political and social freedom, and above all, a continued diminution of human suffering. In short, the history of human experience amended and rendered intelligible by a knowledge of this law, demonstrates that what has been denounced as dangerous and seductive Optimism—is Truth; and conversely, that which has been owlishly regarded as wise and profound Pessimism—is Error.

Nothing logically reconciles free human reason to its own being, to the plan of the universe, to the eternal justice and beneficence of the Supreme Intelligence which we name God, but a knowledge of the existence of this all pervading law of Evolution. Before its discovery there was no rational or consistent theory of creation; no premises upon which to base general and hopeful predictions of the future; all was apparent stagnation, malevolence, darkness.

How many learned people are still unaware that the world moves! Mr. Spencer gives a striking illustration of their conceptions of the universe, and I cannot do better than give you the substance of it. Suppose one of the insect species known as *ephemera*, which lives but the fraction of an hour, were to be born, gifted with intelligence and die in this room. During its brief life, it would be under the impression that the world was a dimly-lighted hall; that the people in it were quiet and peaceable: that the windows always remained closed; that the lights never went out, and that only one man stood upright and talked. Such is the impression many people have of the phenomena of the universe. It is only after the events of many successive generations are reviewed, that we are made fully aware that the world is constantly moving and improving. It never moves backward, however much it may seem to do so, and as "every cause produces more than one effect," and often a multiplicity of effects, so

progress is sometimes so rapid as to astonish and overwhelm the most devout believer in its power.

At the beginning of this century, the man who would have predicted even a few of the most important changes which in seventy years have resulted from the invention and improvement of the steam engine, and the discovery of some of the properties of electricity, would have been sneered at as madly visionary. So also, in August, 1861, would have been regarded the person who ventured to predict that the extinction of African slavery on this Continent would surely follow within a few years the defeat of the Union army at Manassas. Who would have believed in the midsummer of 1870, that as a result of the war between France and Germany, within eighteen months, the Pope would be deprived of temporal power, Louis Napoleon dethroned, free schools established in Italy, and compulsory education contemplated in France.

The average civilized man, whose stupidity would be contemptible if it were not pitiable, when asked if he accepts as true the scientific discoveries to which I have adverted, instantly answers No! When questioned if he has ever made an effort to ascertain their truth or falsity, he as promptly replies in the negative, and may add that he has not the remotest intention of so doing. There is a more learned but not less willfully obtuse class, whose reason, like plaster, has set and stiffened around the mould of some favorite dogma, who remain unaware that beneficence underlies the plan of creation. A still wiser class, but with minds equally inflexible, are the specialists in science who hopelessly declare that there is no visible or comprehensible plan in the processes of nature. But fortunately there is a large number of people who are ready to welcome and adopt if found true, the conclusions of free and rational thought upon every subject, and it is to the consideration of this class that I submit a few clear and distinct propositions.

There are organisms so low in the natural grade that it is a question whether they belong to the animal or vegetable world, and all the evidence so far adduced renders it in the highest degree probable, according to Mr. Darwin, that from some such intermediate production (as these low organisms) both animals and plants have been developed. The germinal vesicle is the same in all organic beings, and both plants and animals are composed of the same chemical elements. The essential difference between them, is, that animals being detached from the soil, and gifted with powers of movement, controlled by a brain, possess, in proportion to their powers of movement, a *free will*.

And the animal Man who has the most varied powers of movement, and the highest development of brain, possesses the freest will. But he is surrounded by the fixed and immutable laws of Nature, which if he violate, either willfully or ignorantly, he must suffer a penalty. It is possible for man to deliberately and understandingly violate these laws, but in almost every instance his ignorance is the cause of their violation. Therefore, it may be laid down as a general rule, that "our suffering is caused by our ignorance." To prevent suffering we must learn these laws and obey them. How else can we enjoy the exercise of this supremest endowment—a *free will*?

Beneficence then underlies the plan of Creation, because where we discover suffering we may invariably trace its cause to our own willfulness or ignorance. Having a free will and the power to remove ignorance, our suffering is a wrong inflicted by ourselves. To vary a time-honored legal maxim, we may rightfully declare that a general principle in the all-including equity of nature is—"where there is a wrong there is a remedy."

And Nature is constantly remedying wrongs, through man, without his conscious agency; which shows that she is working out a plan entirely independent of his con-

currence. Man may aid this plan, and he may retard it, but he cannot permanently obstruct or control it any more than he can permanently stop the descent of a river by obstructing its regular channel. Is it not then the part of prudence to gain some knowledge of this plan, and instead of trying to shape the world according to our whims, conceits or prejudices, to consciously assist this most wise, loving and Divine Nature?

.. To those who will not examine the newly discovered facts of science, but are governed by the necessarily speculative ideas of the great minds of former ages, it seems like sublime assurance to claim even a limited knowledge of Nature's Plan. But I shall furnish proof that there is not only a Design in our Creation, but, also that Nature has been ever plainly trying to force it upon man's attention.

Asking you to bear in mind the propositions already stated, that "suffering is caused by our ignorance;" and "where there is a wrong there is a remedy," I offer the thesis of a plan in our creation.

The two predominant impelling forces in human nature are :

FIRST—*The instinct to preserve individual life, and*

SECOND—*The instinct to perpetuate the species.*

Every physical sense and every faculty of the mind is under subjection to this first instinct. The gratification of his desires, the exercise of his sympathies, the extension of his moral perceptions aid man in preserving his life. I have sought in vain to discover any proclivity, any function, any power, or any element whatever, possessed by man, which does not primarily aid him to preserve individual life.

The second instinct—to perpetuate the species—generally subordinate to the first, is, in frequent instances, so strongly developed as to over-power the instinct of self-preservation. From the age of Trojan-Helen and Paris ;

from the time of Cleopatra and Mark Antony : from the days of Tasso and Leonora down to the present day's police report, there is the same story of sacrifices made, of risks endured and dangers encountered to gratify the instinct by means of which life is perpetuated.

Again, this instinct as exhibited in the deep love which parents bear toward their offspring, often overmasters the instinct of self-preservation. Niobe is represented as receiving the arrows in her own bosom, rather than her children should suffer. Time and again fathers and mothers have heroically sacrificed themselves, standing between their precious little ones and certain death.

Here then is a demonstrated design in Nature,—the preservation and perpetuation of the human species. And notwithstanding wars, famine and pestilence ; despite the most threatening and devastating convulsions of the elements ; yes ! despite his own cruelty, folly and ignorance—man survives.

Have we not then a logical right to infer that one of the objects and purposes—a part at least of the plan of Nature—is, that the human species is preserved and perpetuated in order that it may remain for a still longer period under the operation of this law of universal progress or evolution ? that in the future as in the past, man shall continue to progress towards an ever more perfect mould of form and enlarged capacity of intellect ?

From the same premises we may also draw this conclusion : that the true definition of Sin is the commission of an act which interferes with or tends to thwart the preservation of individual life or the perpetuation of the species. If we commit such an act ignorantly, the pain which inevitably follows is Nature's reminder that we are interfering with her plan. Let her have her own way, and even assist her in it, and her generosity is without limit.

Sin, therefore, is the invariable prefix to pain, and pain

in almost every instance is the result of ignorance. How, then, shall we best acquire a knowledge of that which interferes with the plan of Nature, and find remedies for the innumerable sufferings of mankind?

There is, I contend, a sure method of acquiring such knowledge, and by conforming to and aiding Nature's plan we may immediately diminish and eventually extinguish the crimes, the poverty, the diseases, in a word, the pains which afflict our race. This will appear rash doctrine, but we will see if it is not logically and in all reason, true.

By closely observing the tendencies of the Present in the freest countries, by reviewing carefully the history of the Past, we may arrive at some just conclusions concerning the Future. We may, in fact, be enabled to consciously further the design of Nature.

Look at what has been accomplished by a similar method of observation and induction in predicting the weather! Sixty-five per cent. of all the predictions of the United States Signal Bureau have been verified, and who can doubt that when the system is extended, and a sufficient number of exceptions or variations have been tabulated to ascertain the general rules which govern, or the plan which pervades the winds, tides and clouds, that rain or fair weather will be predicted with absolute accuracy?

But it is utterly impossible for us to perceive the tendencies of the Present, so long as we have some preconceived or favorite, but narrow, theory as to what these tendencies should be. We should endeavor to observe without bias—we should first positively ascertain the facts, and reason therefrom.

The gross and dense stupidity of the average civilized man is betrayed by his folly in attempting to manage events, instead of learning and obeying the rules which he cannot change. He is not yet convinced that all his

petty fuming and fretting, his childish attachment to dead idols, does not prevent the world moving grandly on in obedience to established and harmonious laws.

De Tocqueville said: "It is not necessary that God himself should speak in order to disclose to us the unquestionable signs of His will. We can discern them in the habitual course of Nature, and in the invariable tendency of events."

I am aware that in a country where a majority of average civilized men hold sway, it is akin to treason to charge them with gross and dense stupidity; but the truth of the accusation may be so easily and triumphantly maintained that I do not hesitate to prefer it. A mere example will serve to substantiate the charge, and it is one that lately came within my own knowledge.

Not long ago, in one of the seaport towns of a neighboring State, there died a pious and estimable old lady, who had been afflicted with a disease of a tumorous nature, for more than fourteen years. During all that time she was confined to the house, and for many years to her bed. She was watched over and cared for by a devoted brother and an only sister, who, throughout her long illness, exhibited rare patience and self-sacrifice. At the time of the poor creature's death the tumorous growth equaled in size her emaciated body. For months before her last moment, she appeared to be in a dying condition, the helpless victim of the keenest tortures of disease. The process of decay having begun several days previous to her death, her friends were obliged to muffle their faces before approaching the bedside. The sister and brother of the lady were good and pious people, and members of an orthodox Christian church. The sister said to a friend, after these last dreadful days were over, that at one time they had almost rebelled against God for the tortures He had permitted the poor departed to endure, but after praying three days she had become recon-

eiled. In other words she accused God of permitting this terrible suffering, but after remaining in a highly exalted, mental and nervous condition for three days, although she could not thereby have obtained any new light upon the subject, she had annulled the indictment! But mark what follows. Two eminent physicians asked the brother and sister to allow a *post mortem* examination of the body, representing that the case was a very peculiar one, and that an investigation might result in valuable additions to scientific knowledge and perhaps be the means of preventing great suffering in the treatment of similar cases. But this permission was not only decidedly refused, but, fearful that an attempt might be made to disinter and dissect the body, the brother and sister took the precaution to have it buried near the main-gate of the cemetery where it could be guarded night and day. In effect, these good but densely stupid people, persisted in blindly charging God with cruelty toward one individual, when they, themselves, were guilty of cruelty toward the whole human race.

Do you wonder after this illustration of average civilized intelligence, that mankind has been for centuries and is likely to be for sometime to come, victims of disease, subject to what are incorrectly called accidents, and wretched, lingering, horrible deaths? Is there not, in this illustration, a hint of the transcendent benefits which would follow the substitution of scientific knowledge for superstition?

Let us now apply our method to the discovery of remedies for the wrongs which burden humanity: the terrible evils which have grown out of man's persistent and habitual commission of acts which interfere with Nature's plan.

As already indicated, the first remedy is the removal of ignorance; because ignorance more than anything and everything else, interferes with the preservation of indi-

vidual life and the perpetuation of the species, and it is assuring to consider the numerous tendencies revealed to us in the present wide-spread and thoughtful agitation of the subject of education. In all enlightened countries there is a large class who perceive the vital necessity of educating the masses, and who advocate the system of compulsory education. The system has been successfully practiced for many years in Prussia; Great Britain is approaching it by her recent laws entitled the School Acts; Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut have begun it by legislation in relation to factory children, compelling parents to educate their children a certain number of hours each day; and California, Illinois, and some other states, are reported as advancing toward it.

In the United States it has been supposed that education is all but universal, but this supposition is destroyed by figures contained in the last report of the National Commissioners of Education. (1871.) The number of illiterates, or persons above the age of ten years who cannot write, throughout the Union, is given as 5,660,074. In New York State alone the number is 241,152, and in Pennsylvania 222,356. Even in New England, which is looked upon as containing more liberal and cultivated inhabitants than any other part of the country, the number of illiterates is not less than 195,963.

It must be granted that a diminution of ignorance among the masses will be followed by a greatly improved sense of justice, and therefore by many wholesome and beneficial reforms, which in the present condition of popular education are impracticable and visionary. But a simple diminution of illiteracy is not enough. I agree with many others, in saying that I have but little faith that what is ordinarily spoken of as education, will ever be the means of accomplishing great and radical reforms. For education means something more than knowledge,

whether culled from books or derived from observation and reflection. I have found no definition of the word superior to Professor Huxley's. He says.—“Education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of Nature, under which name, I include not merely things and their forces, but men and their doings; and the fashioning of the affections and of the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws.” And I shall vary the definition but slightly when I add thereto, that the best educated are those who possess the most thoroughly instructed and disciplined faculties under the control of the most enlightened will.

Such an education should be made general and compulsory. A recent writer has shown how this can be done, even under our republican form of government, without violation of its constitution. His plan in brief is—that all children who do not attend public schools, shall be compelled to submit to periodical examinations in order to ascertain if they are being educated; the parents to be responsible for their instruction. This plan would do away with the perhaps unconstitutional feature of enforced attendance of public schools; although there can be no doubt that in the constitution of every truly republican form of government, the right is inherent to prevent generations of children growing up uneducated, and as a matter of course, criminal. The same writer urges the wisdom of making the public schools so attractive as to induce the largest voluntary attendance.

In speaking of education, I do not wish to be understood as referring only to the training of children. Many persons are incapable of receiving a true education until fully grown. And it is the fully grown persons, upon whom devolves the training of the coming generation, who should be first educated. If I could be granted the absolute control of one hundred Anglo-Saxon children during the period between the age of four and eighteen, I

would guarantee that at the age of thirty, seventy-five of them would be frog-worshippers, and fifty of these would persecute any one who did not share their religious convictions. I say Anglo-Saxon children; in the matter of persecution I would promise to do still better with children of the Latin race.

We may now inquire what is the best method of education; or by what means our intellects may be most thoroughly instructed "in the laws of Nature, and our affections and will fashioned to move in harmony with those laws." This question cannot be fully answered within the limits of a single address, but I may state some of the essential principles which must, in my opinion, be accepted before a real education can be acquired.

The laws of Nature cannot be learned without the adoption of the principle embodied in the maxim of Descartes, already quoted,—“Give unqualified assent to no propositions but those the truth of which is so clear and distinct, that they cannot be doubted.” With this rule as a guide, we need not fear whether it directs us to what is termed Idealism, or Materialism; or whether it leads us to the complete abolition of much of the artificial twaddle known as Metaphysics, by means of which the falsest beliefs are nourished and sustained. It will certainly convey us closer to truth than any other rule. Strictly adhering to it, we at first conclude that the world of attainable knowledge is exceedingly limited, because there seems to be a distinct realm beyond us belonging to the Unknowable. Why, for instance, Nature produces perfection by growth or evolution, instead of making everything perfect at once, is, in the present stage of man's development, simply unanswerable and unknowable,—and consequently much valuable time is saved which might otherwise be devoted to useless speculation. But who can say that such knowledge is not within the reach of the future perfectly developed man? Remembering the fact of its

own germinal origin, the mind assents to the probability that there is no end to mankind's attainment of knowledge.

Education would be promoted by the use as a text book in every advanced school, of a work not entirely unlike one entitled :—" A Treatise on Facts," by the distinguished law writer, James Ram. The mind cannot be sufficiently disciplined in the strictest method of ascertaining facts, for it is very evident, that without accurate preception of facts there can be no just reflection or indeed proper action. As preliminary to their apprehension, it is necessary that we should not be influenced by anything we may know or imagine of the source whence facts may come, for nothing impairs our ability to perceive facts so much as undue veneration. The utterances of tradition and history, the words of reputed wise men and philosophers, the assertions of powerful, titled or wealthy personages, should all be subjected to the same thorough and impartial tests. In this way only can the mind be cleared of the rubbish of fabulous cosmogonies and barbarous theologies and prepared for the reception of truth and justice. Better, by far, become a Gradgrind than an emotionalist. But it is not necessary to become either the one or the other. Who was more scientifically exact than Goethe?—and yet he is the author of as purely sympathetic poems as can be found in any language. Because we may take a pleasure in studying the puzzles of Euclid, are we thereby disqualified from loving and wondering over the peeping white violet or trailing arbutus of early Spring? Shall a taste for the study of paleontology unfit us for the enjoyment of Kaulbach's pictures or the music of Brethoven?

Some of the most scholastic and learned of men have been incredibly deficient in the power to determine facts. Of what value, upon any subject involving precise appreciation of facts, is the opinion of the man who believes that a person named Methusaleh lived nine hundred and

sixty odd years; or that the Almighty Ruler of the universe authorized one Moses to slaughter thousands of innocent and captive Midianite women and children; or that at the instance of a Hebrew peasant, however good and noble, or any other mere man, the operation of any law of Nature was ever, for a moment, suspended? In short of how much scientific value are the opinions of those who regard credulity as a virtue and who are unaware that through Doubt came all positive knowledge. Through the medium of facts the mind perceives that there is very little authentic history, and that theology and sophistry are synonymous terms.

By adopting the strictest method of reasoning we arrive at the conclusion that Science only can solve the many problems which surround and mystify us. To it must we address ourselves when we ask: "Is the mind immortal?" "What are the attributes of the Infinite Power which we call God?"

What, for instance, can inspire a firmer hope in the future existence of the mind than the scientific fact, but lately established—that Force is indestructable?

Would I, then, have the moral and religious training of the intellect neglected? By no means. There should be used in every school a text book such as suggested by several writers, consisting of a compilation of extracts from the teachings of Christ, Confucius, Buddha, Plato, and all the great moralists of both ancient and modern times. But above all, this should be taught—this old morality—as ancient as the earliest dawn of human sympathy. "As you would that others should do unto you, do you even so unto them." This is morality, the actual practice or positive ignoring of which cannot be evaded, for it calls for adoption or rejection in the affairs of everyday life; and without it, prayers, creeds, sacraments, altars, mosques, synagogues and cathedrals are the mere accessories of inconsistent flummery!

But we must go to Nature for religious teaching. It has been said that "Copernicus gave to the human mind a new heavens. Columbus a new earth,"—but it was Luther who gave the human mind liberty to study the new heavens and the new earth. O! Protestantism! beloved mother of free thought! How much greater than its ability to comprehend is mankind's indebtedness to thee! How much grander than the new heavens and the new earth is the boundless universe of liberated mind!

Any system of public instruction would be incomplete unless it included the criminal class, and the tendencies of the present age in relation to the subject of Prison Reform are among the happiest auguries of the future. This subject is engaging the most liberal and philanthropic minds of Europe and America. The public at large is beginning for the first time in human history to sympathize with criminals as a class. It begins to notice that there is no uniformity in the system of justice now administered in our courts, and that society is not improved by a vindictive punishment of criminals. It perceives, in fact, the necessity of reforming them.

Above a certain grade of offense criminals should not be sentenced to any fixed term of imprisonment. They should be sentenced to confinement until truly educated and reformed. The Prussian prison system which aims so to educate and reform, appears to be the most enlightened, has been the most successful and should be everywhere introduced.

Capital punishment should be, and doubtless soon will be, abolished in all the civilized countries of the globe. At the beginning of this century hanging in Europe was considered the only adequate punishment for offenses now classed under the head of petty larceny. Since that time it has been abolished in several countries, and it is retained in others only as the punishment for the highest offenses known to the law. That one of the tendencies of this age

is to do away with it entirely, any one with ordinary powers of observation may readily learn. Certainly, the time ought long since to have gone by, when men, whose offense consists in upholding political views from which the majority dissent, can be led forth by files of indifferent soldiers and brutally shot.

Enforced education, which shall eventually endow the average civilized man, (which epithet properly includes legislators who permit the existence of statutes repugnant to common sense,) with the same ideas of truth and justice possessed now only by the educated few, should then, be the basis of, and precede all other great and radical reforms.

The sequence of compulsory education, and an improved sense of justice, will be the conferring upon woman of those rights and privileges which are at present generally considered the sole prerogative of the male sex. The history of civilization shows a gradual advance from the brute power over woman displayed by man in his savage condition, to a concession of the privileges which she now enjoys. But civilization is still going forward, and the inclination to bestow upon woman all her natural rights is one of the sure tendencies of our times. This is evinced in the legislation of many of the United States giving her the right to hold and transfer real estate in her own name and independent of her husband's control, besides yielding her several other legal privileges, which not many years ago would have been considered destructive of human society.

The idea that woman is unsexed unless she is treated and acts as nearly as possible like an animated wax-doll, is not so widely prevalent as it formerly was. She is, however, still enduring wrongs at the will of her physical superiors and some of the commonest legal rights are withheld from her, both in America and Europe. She is taxed without representation: the right of suffrage is

almost universally withheld from her. As a human being, who in one stage of her embryological development is undistinguishable from the male--she is his moral equal and has a natural right to an independent voice in shaping the government under which she lives. And if only one woman in these United States desires to vote she has a natural right to do so, and no other woman and no man, nor all the other women, nor all the other men, can justly prevent her exercise of such a right. The croakers who would not concede the natural right of our Southern slaves to freedom, but predicted all sorts of disasters as sure to follow the abolition of their favorite institution, are now dismally croaking over the evil results which will inevitably follow the emancipation of woman. But the plan of Nature will be worked out despite the croakings of these hoarse-throated individuals, and I believe there are persons now living who will witness woman's enfranchisement in most, if not all, the states of the American Union.

Whatever increases the interest of woman in the affairs of civil government not only enlarges her brain capacity, but it also advances the science of civil government, and the exercise of the right to vote would undoubtedly increase that interest. If female children were instructed as soon as they were able to comprehend it, that, as well as the boys, they should, at a certain age, have a voice in all matters affecting the government of the nation, would they not immediately become interested in new studies, and cease to be so deeply absorbed in the study of dress, of fashion and the conventional frivolities of the day, than which nothing seems so detrimental to the mental and physical development of woman?

The deep problem of how best to extirpate the giant evil of intemperance awaits for its solution, the arrival of woman, with her keener aversion to physical and moral degradation, to political power. More than all, woman's enfranchisement will prepare her for the vast change in

the laws governing civil marriage, which must logically and necessarily come, and which her voice will powerfully promote.

But I need not dwell upon other reasons why woman should enjoy equal political rights, for I could not expect to add many arguments to the numerous and persuasive ones put forth by the earnest and able advocates of her cause. It is sufficient to call attention again to the plan of Nature, and point out how greatly improvement in civil government, in the mental and physical condition of woman, in the advancement of temperance, and the innumerable other good consequences which always result from remedying a wrong—would affect the preservation of individual life and the perpetuation of the species. We may then clearly see, that it is our duty to give conscious assistance to the plan of Nature, by graciously according to woman the enjoyment of all her natural rights.

We come now to the consideration of a most momentous tendency of this age, which is thrust upon our notice by the organized, wide and ever increasing agitation concerning the antagonistic claims of the capitalist and the working man. Time will permit me to give you but a brief and imperfect abstract of my views on this question.

It cannot be denied that a vast proportion of the most intense sufferings of humanity, and nearly all the crimes are the result of that which most directly interferes with the preservation of individual life and the perpetuation of the species,—namely,—poverty, or the unequal and unjust distribution of natural wealth. And by natural wealth, I mean land and its immediate productions,—vegetable, animal and mineral, and my definition excludes articles manufactured therefrom.

That the tendencies of the age are irrepressibly toward reform in this matter, is visible to every correct observer and receptive thinker. Says John Stuart Mill: "The

most remarkable consequences of advancing civilization, which the state of the world is now forcing upon the attention of thinking minds, is this,—that power passes more and more from individuals and small knots of individuals to masses: that the importance of the masses becomes constantly greater, that of individuals less.” Again, he says: “In the beginning of society the power of the masses does not exist, because property and intelligence have no existence beyond a very small portion of the community.” Yet the average civilized man fails to see that we have passed the beginning of society, and that an ever growing sense of justice, exclaims loudly against a monopoly of either property or intelligence. And the history of civilization affords proof that the possession of property is essential to the growth of intelligence. Sir John Lubbock informs us that the Australians when first visited by Europeans, were lower in the scale of civilization than any other known race, having no religious forms or ceremonies, and no ideas relative to the existence of a Deity. And the reason therefor was that they had no knowledge of the cultivation of any cereals, and possessed no animals capable of domestication, their life was a daily struggle for the means of subsistence. Science and art are to-day most fully cultivated and civilization farthest developed, among nations which afford the greatest number of individuals who are beyond the mind absorbing cares of want.

The evidences, direct and indirect, of a tendency toward the more equal distribution of wealth are numerous and convincing. We notice upon all sides the growth of crime, and both individual and organized corruption; we perceive that wealth is power, no matter how acquired; that those who succeed in stealing millions are practically exempt from punishment, though the starving man, who steals a loaf of bread, is treated with the severest injustice. The recent gigantic “Ring Frauds” in the city of

New York arouses us to the discussion of these questions: Should the mere possession of wealth confer special and peculiar privileges upon any man or class of men? Shall the honest man work in filthy ditches twelve hours a day for the means of bare subsistence and see the sons of sordid thieves roll by in idle luxury? In our large cities the public sense of honor is so far diluted with admiration for what is termed "smartness," as to praise by faint denunciation these who steal large sums, and to denounce by faint praise those who have the opportunity of safely doing so, and are restrained by moral and religious principle. The effect is practically to make servants and slaves of those who remain strictly and unyieldingly honest, who will not for money, which means power and often life itself, endure the soul-shudderings of those who, for the sake of hoarding it, stoop to the meanest, the most degrading, the most dastardly of acts. Said Alexander Hamilton, "Give a man power over my subsistence, and he has a right over my whole moral being."

For the excessive miseries suffered by mankind owing to the unequal and unjust distribution of natural wealth, there must be found adequate means of relief.

That there is a revolution in progress grander in its proportions and more universal in extent than any the world has ever witnessed, is visible to all except the wilfully blind.

There are two parties: one an ever expanding minority, the other an ever contracting majority. Between these parties there is a conflict of opinion, induced by different ideas of justice, and this conflict is insuppressible.

The majority say that nothing is so monstrously unjust as to take away property from those who possess the legal title.

The minority say that nothing is so monstrously unjust as to permit any one individual to acquire, either honorably or by fraud, force, superior craft, or inheritance, prop-

erty which would support the lives of thousands,—while thousands are starving; that all must work and all shall be provided with the means of subsistence.

The majority pertly and thoughtlessly affirm that the present state of affairs has always existed and always will, and remedies therefor are purely Utopian.

The minority point to history and show a constant dispersion of wealth from individuals to masses. They claim that only in our day was it possible for poor men in one short life to accumulate fortunes so large as those of Astor and Stewart. They declare that co-operation and civilization are substantially identical, and that civilization and co-operation are irresistably advancing.

The minority also declare that the majority regard everything as impracticable which is not sure to happen in their life times, and everything Utopian which cannot occur until sometime after their deaths, and that their sagacious and profound affirmations that wealth cannot be distributed through co-operation have no weight in view of what real education does for the individual, and what it may accomplish when generally diffused.

Besides it should be remembered that natural wealth is confined to the possession of a few, who are so enormously outnumbered by the poor, that the latter may with perfect ease, and without violence or tumult enforce a just distribution whenever they have acquired sufficient intelligence to devise and agree upon the fairest and best measures of division. Moreover statisticians assert that the rich are growing richer, and the poor, poorer, a wrong for which final and natural provision must be made. Only by furthering the plan of Nature can we avoid the bloodshed and pain which will follow the attempts at reform made by the impatient, impractical and long-suffering victims of poverty. The old argument that if wealth were equally distributed, it would soon find its way into the hands of its former possessors, is witty and epigram-

matie, but is absurd and unworthy of contradiction, considering the successful working in various communities, of the principles of co-operation.

The Parisian Communists, although right in theory, were led by men too ignorant to comprehend that the objects fought for, should be preceded by general education, by conceding justice to women, and that they can only be accomplished by peaceful and wise legislation. Besides, it is not France, with its hordes of priest-ridden illiterates, savage theorists, and semi-barbarous soldiers, but the United States of America, with their co-operative system of government, with their hosts of omniverous readers, independent thinkers, peaceable and practical workers which lead the world in experiment and reform.

It is often remarked that in our country a man who is willing to work can always earn a good living. Even if this be strictly true, which I deny, the question of distributing natural wealth is not one of expediency, but one of justice. What more common argument was employed by the supporters of slavery in the Southern States, than that the slaves were better off as they were, and that giving them freedom would be productive of anarchy. No! it is not France nor Europe, with a population of half-starved and ignorant workingmen whose necessities compel them to sell themselves for promises of work and offers of food,—but it is in free and well-provided America, where the working men “know their rights; and knowing dare maintain,” that the first successful attempt at general co-operation will be made.

It is doubtful if the human race can ever enter upon a higher plane of civilization until this distribution takes place. There is certainly no worse use the human brain can be put to than in devising schemes for the hoarding of money. The natural rights of men to the land and sea, and their products, are precisely equal, and a just system of co-operation would compel every able-bodied

person to become in some measure a producer: at the same time the accumulation of natural wealth for the benefit of one individual would be prohibited and treated as a crime, at least equal in degree to that of larceny. The distribution of natural wealth would therefore prove to be the distribution of labor. No one would be exempt from his or her proportional share of it, which, compared to what is now required of the day laborer, struggling for existence, would be limited indeed. Every man and woman might have ample leisure and opportunity to pursue in any direction the bent of their individual tastes and favorite studies, and thereby confer benefits upon the whole community. There might even then be an aristocracy, but it would be the aristocracy of manhood and womanhood, and not based upon the ownership of inartistic baubles. The struggle then would be not for existence, but for excellence. We should then be spared the common and melancholy spectacle furnished by men who have exhausted their energies in acquiring fortunes, and who have "retired from business," not to study any branch of science, art or literature, or to engage in any work of philanthropy, whereby the condition of their less fortunate fellow creatures might be improved: O! No! their so-called business habits have interfered with the acquisition of a taste for study, and as for philanthropy, the same habits have also retarded its development; and we hear from them only regrets that they ever retired from the pursuit of business. What thrilling and ennobling ideas of life such men possess!

Another excellent result of distribution would be that woman being rendered independent of man for the means of subsistence, would be as untrammelled as he is, in the exercise of political rights.

But it is impossible to conceive the multiplicity of effects which would follow a conscious assistance of the

natural tendencies to ameliorate the condition of the human species.

What now must logically follow the reforms of which I have merely traced the outlines? General education, the emancipation of woman, the distribution of wealth, must, in my judgment, be followed by the abolition of civil marriage, or the removal of the present unjust legal restraints upon the affections; and this will ultimately result in the extinguishment of hereditary disease.

And here let me pause to say, and I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not advocate the abolition of civil marriage—I only say that according to the principles I have laid down, its abolition is inevitable. But you may rest assured that a change involving such important results as the placing of the marriage contract upon a footing with other civil contracts will not be precipitated. Neither you, nor I, nor the human race are prepared for such a change. Doubtless a conviction in the general mind, that such a change must certainly come, will result in a conscious promotion of it, but as I tried to impress upon you in the first part of this discourse, time is an element which must enter largely into all calculations of future reform. Time, as I remarked, is something, as it effects the duration of our lives, but compared to the past or probable future time it is infinitesimal. It must be remembered that the conservative element in human nature always predominates over the radical, and that “prejudice is the friction which prevents the too swift and dangerous revolution of the wheels of progress.” We need not fear social chaos. That is against the laws of Nature, and there is no instance of it in history, though there have been instances, such as the First French Revolution—of the government of society by desperate but homogeneous ignorance.

The tendency of modern legislation is undoubtedly toward facilitating divorces, toward an equitable construc-

tion of the marriage contract, and in favor of a modification of the traditional guardianship of man over woman. The laws of some of the United States are of the most liberal description in these respects. A law recently introduced into the English parliament regulating and moderating the punishment for bigamy is one of the significant signs of the times. The abolition of all marriage laws is openly advocated in various portions of this country, and independent thinkers confess that toward this reform civilization is plainly advancing. For any healthy male or female to remain in a state of celibacy is a wrong, because it interferes, according to statistics, as well with the preservation of individual life, as with the perpetuation of the species. It is also a wrong to compel two persons who discover after marriage, that they are entirely uncongenial, unadapted to each other, and altogether mis-mated, to remain forever wretched because they were not wise enough to foresee their wretchedness, and avoid the marriage. For these wrongs, and for the ever-growing and life-destroying shame of lewdness, and the enormously increasing crime of infanticide, the products both of unnatural marriage laws, there must exist specific remedies.

The reforms already discussed should precede the abolition of civil marriage. How can there be intelligent and free selection of wives and husbands until education is general, and the laws of hereditary descent, especially, better understood: until the unjust exclusion of woman from political rights is obsolete; and until wealth is distributed in such a fair manner, that in choosing a mate there can be no prejudice founded on adventitious merits? In all countries where marriage laws have been liberal and wealth retained in the hands of a few, the result has been polygamy—a barbarous purchase of wives by the few males who possessed the wealth, and wherever this practice has prevailed men and women have become degraded.

Darwin claims that monogamous marriage arose from the jealousy of the male. The same great naturalist and philosopher shows that among nearly all animals the female selects, and that is undoubtedly what must be denominated, the natural method. He also directs attention to the remarkable circumstance, that while man takes such pains to improve his breeds of horses, cattle, sheep and poultry, he does not apply the same principles to the improvement and development of the human race.

I will first answer a primary objection to the abolition of civil marriage, and then discuss one of the results which must rationally follow its abolition. It is said that if a husband for any reason happened to grow tired of his wife, and were not restrained by the law of marriage, he would desert her and their children. Supposing this, for the sake of argument, to be true,—so far as the support of the wife or children were concerned, under a wise and just system of distributed wealth, the desertion would make no difference. It is doubtful if parents are the proper educators of their own children above a certain age, indeed, there is no question that much of the suffering in this world is indirectly caused by vain, partial, unjust and indulgent parents. The success which has attended the instruction of children of the tenderest years in the Social Palace at Guise, in France, shows the wisdom of other teaching besides that of parents.

But I deny that the male would be more apt to desert the female than she him. Selection would be chiefly exercised by woman herself, and this perfect freedom of choice would, I believe, render marriages happier than any now known, and equally as permanent. Those who know how closely children bind the parents together, and who will make allowance for the moral restraint imposed by an education as defined by Prof. Huxley, can conceive new reasons why these marriages would be apt to be permanent.

Another objection regarding increase of population made against the abolition of civil marriage I shall not here discuss. When education is diffused, woman emancipated, wealth divided and all the able-bodied become producers, the question of regulating the propagation of our kind will be taken from the domain of political economy, and assigned a place where it properly belongs—among the problems of physical science. Let the followers of Malthus, or those who will not believe there is any design in our creation, nor that there is to be any further growth of knowledge, puzzle their brains about the exact number of people the globe can support: until it is found necessary to prepare for inhabitation the immense waste places of the earth by means of artesian wells, forest culture, or some better mode, the objection is not a practical one,—although Solon, Plato and Aristotle, in their time, thought it was.

Having replied to the most common objections of the average civilized man against any disturbance of existing marriage laws, I proceed to show the crowning benefits to humanity, which would be derived from the universal practice of the free and natural selection of husbands and wives.

We find that mankind is now, and for ages past has been, suffering from innumerable constitutional or organic diseases which have been inherited from some immediate or remote ancestor.

Have any remedies for these diseases ever been discovered? There has been, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, but limited progress made in medical science since the age of Aristotle. To-day, after centuries of investigation and experiment, the medical faculty have not found one single specific for any disease. Many of the most learned physicians have declared that there is no such thing as a specific in medicine. A few except quinine and mercury. While little progress has been made

in medical science, strictly so called, there have been vast strides made in the discovery of sanitary and surgical measures to prevent and alleviate disease and pain, and extensive knowledge acquired of anatomy and the laws of health. But still—dreadful scrofula, malignant cancer, frightful insanity and hideous leprosy, besides unnumbered other inherited diseases continue to afflict and torture poor, short-sighted humanity, and the apothecary's drugs are powerless to remove them.

Microscopists give us some right to believe that the origin of all diseases may eventually be traced to the existence in the blood or bodily tissues of minute and poisonous parasites. It has been positively ascertained that some diseases do so originate. The commissioners appointed by the French Government, a few years ago, to investigate the cause of the wide-spread and fatal disease among the silk worms in Southern France, discovered by microscopic aid, that the disease was caused by the presence of parasites, and this disease was both epidemic and inheritable. It was finally cured by separating the bodies of those infested from those free from the parasites, and by destroying the infested,—a simple and natural remedy.

A similar remedy will help to annihilate man's most inveterate and destructive foe—the monster *Disease*. Allow perfectly free selection among educated sexes, and before many generations the long catalogue of human woes will be diminished, the more perfect will select the more perfect,—the unfit will die, “the fittest will survive,” and the final result of a knowledge of Nature's plan, and a conscious furtherance of it will be—a perfect mind in a perfect body, which is the true Millenium!

“O! Yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood.”

Of course the most of those present will reject my

views, because they are measurably distasteful even to such liberal men as I know compose the body of my listeners. But I have made no rhetorical appeal to your feelings, such as the topics discussed would certainly admit of; my arguments must stand by the force of reason, or not at all. Neither shall I anticipate and answer any personal charge of demagogueism, of being theoretical or impractical. To the average civilized man, whose thoughts have no weight except from the ball and chain of prejudice attached to them, every project, new to him, is impracticable. There are many people who have long held views similar to my own, and who will regard as commonplace ideas, which others will look upon as sensation. The broad general principles I have laid down the world will come up to, though I may not live to see it. I am quite aware that it takes time and persistent effort to overcome the crude and sheep-like convictions of the multitude. The spirit of intolerance that condemned Socrates to death for teaching unpopular truth, which denounced and persecuted Galileo for the same offense, is still alive! Let the blood of the recently murdered French Communists, and the massacred students of Havana bear witness!

I expect and welcome my share of personal defamation and abuse. Still, the world will continue to move forward, and though I have laid stress upon the time required to perfect great reforms, still I remember that one cause sometimes produces a vast multiplicity of effects, and I am exceedingly hopeful of the immediate results that will follow enforced and general education.

You all know me as an orderly citizen. Some of you know that I served in the field throughout the late war to maintain order in the government under which we live. I will add to your information, if you do not happen to be apprised of it, that I am not only legally, but happily married, and that I work as hard for my subsistence as men of my profession generally do. I also desire to say

that I am no office seeker, and shall never seek nor accept the political influence of the workingmen. I have lived long enough in the largest cities of Europe and America, to be deeply and sorrowfully impressed with the vastness of human suffering, and I can give no other or better reason for taking the unpopular, firm, and perhaps dogmatic stand I do, than that Luther gave for his opposition to Romanism—"I cannot otherwise."

I believe the highest morality is to labor for the good of future generations; I believe the sufferings of mankind are unnecessary and self-inflicted, and that they can be prevented through a knowledge of the truth; and I believe truth can be discovered by adhering to this golden rule of science,—*Give unqualified assent to no propositions but those the truth of which is so clear and distinct that they cannot be doubted.*

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